

LOOK FOR THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE ROD AT YOUR INFORMATION REPOSITORY

For ease of use, the Record of Decision, Resource Management Plan and associated Appendices are combined in one bound volume, and all maps referenced in the text are located directly following the sections in which they are first referenced. The document is available for review online at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/winnemucca/> and at the same repositories used throughout the planning process (see below).

Information Repositories:

Carson City BLM Field Office • Winnemucca BLM Field Office • Gerlach Library • Humboldt County Library • Lyon County Library • Pershing County Public Library • Reno Public Library • UN-Reno Getchell Library • Cedarville BLM Field Office • Cedarville Branch Library • Modoc County Library • Sacramento Public Library • California BLM State Office (Sacramento) • Nevada BLM State Office (Reno)

As always, if you have any questions, please contact
the Winnemucca Field Office (775-623-1500) or the Surprise Field Office (530-279-6101)
or visit our website at <http://www.blackrockhighrock.org/>.

Questions??

Contact the Winnemucca Field Office (775-623-1500) or the Surprise Field Office (530-279-6101)
or visit our website at <http://www.blackrockhighrock.org/>.

United States
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
1340 Financial Boulevard
P.O. Box 12000
Reno, Nevada 89520-0006

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Bureau of Land Management
Permit No. G-76

THE BLACK ROCK HIGH ROCK

BULLETIN

Black Rock-High Rock Resource Management Planning Newsletter



Vol. 3, Issue 1 – July 2004

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN COMPLETED - CONCLUDING 3 1/2 YEARS OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING



The Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA and Associated Wilderness Areas, and Other Contiguous Lands in Nevada has been approved by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) State Directors of California and Nevada. The 1.2 million-acre NCA Planning Area falls under the jurisdiction of the Winnemucca (Winnemucca, Nevada) and Surprise (Cedarville, California) Field Offices. The two BLM State Directors have signed a Record of Decision (ROD) approving the RMP committing that the public lands in the planning area will be managed in accordance with the approved RMP. The ROD and RMP meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) at 43 U.S.C. §§1701-1785 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) at 40 CFR 1505.2.

For ease of use, the Record of Decision, Resource Management Plan and associated Appendices are combined in one bound volume, and all maps referenced in the text are located directly following the sections in which they are first referenced. The document is available for review at the same repositories used throughout the planning process (see list on last page of this bulletin), and online at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/winnemucca/>.

In accordance with BLM regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-1(b), since no significant changes have been made in the Proposed RMP that was made available for public review and protest on September 17, 2003 (Federal Register, Vol. 68, No. 180, pg. 54487), the RMP in its entirety is not appealable. However, three decisions included in the RMP are implementation actions that are now subject to appeal. Two of these implementation actions deal with Transportation: 1.) Designation of roads and motorized trails open to motorized use; and 2.) Designation of routes closed to motorized use. The third deals with Wilderness and Wildlife Management: maintenance of existing water sources for



wildlife. More information on these implementation actions and the procedures for appealing them are in the ROD at Attachment 1, Implementation Decisions.

Whether or not a decision or action is appealable, members of the public are always encouraged to express their views and to participate during implementation of the decisions included in the RMP.

Eight protests were received following publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Proposed RMP (FEIS/PRMP). As a result of these protests several small changes were made in the format and wording of the RMP to better explain some issues and two technical corrections were made that affect small parts of the planning area. One correction removed the requirement for “no surface occupancy” for geothermal energy development on the 15,000-acre South Playa. The second correction removed two small hanging playas from designation as “Open” to OHV use to “Limited” to designated motorized trails.

The FEIS/PRMP State of Nevada Governor’s Consistency Review included consistency issues raised by two agencies. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) expressed concern that the PRMP was not consistent with previously developed BLM wildlife habitat management plans and existing and proposed NDOW species management plans. BLM reviewed all the plans in question and determined that there were no inconsistency issues. The Nevada Division of State Parks raised a consistency concern regarding Americans with Disabilities Act compliance at present and future BLM facilities within the NCA. BLM also determined that this was not a RMP consistency issue. It should also be noted that in December 2003 BLM and NDOW signed a Memorandum of Understanding related to management of wildlife populations, habitats and facilities in BLM designated wilderness areas in Nevada. The RMP now includes the provisions of this MOU; this is not a significant change.

The Approved Resource Management Plan

The approved resource management plan is essentially the same as Alternative D in the Final EIS and Proposed

RMP. It was developed as a result of public and agency comments received on the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS. Alternative D drew primarily upon Alternative B, the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS, but selectively adopted portions of the other three alternatives. It corresponded closely with the recommendations made by the RAC Subgroup and other members of the public. The recommendations were that the resources and uses recognized in the NCA Act be protected and that intrusive management actions be minimized. The use of an adaptive management approach provides flexibility to change management intensity as public use increases. The approved RMP is very similar to the Proposed Plan with the minor clarifications and technical corrections noted above that resulted from the protests and from the Governor’s consistency review.

- The Approved Resource Management Plan (Alternative D) was approved because it follows four main principles:
- (a) It is consistent with the requirements and intent of the NCA Act to “preserve, protect, and enhance” the nationally significant resources of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon area for “current and future generations of Americans;”
 - (b) It best addresses the diverse community and stakeholder concerns in a fair and equitable manner;
 - (c) It is consistent with public input provided by the RAC Subgroup and Tribal, State and local governments, and the general public; and
 - (d) It provides a workable framework for future management of the planning area.

Among the attributes that led to this determination are: provisions for protecting NCA and wilderness resources (historic emigrant trails, wilderness attributes, archaeological, geologic, biological) including special features such as special status species and riparian areas; an adaptive management program that will be used to define and pro-



tect resources as knowledge increases and circumstances change; and provisions for visitor use in a manner consistent with the protection of the cultural and natural resources.

RMP Implementation

The Black Rock-High Rock NCA will develop an implementation strategy that will include further opportunities for public involvement in determining what parts of the NCA RMP should be the highest priority for future implementation. On April 29th and 30th, a joint RAC meeting was held in Sparks, NV at which a sub-group was created to help BLM implement the approved RMP and provide input on day-to-day management of the NCA. The implementation plan will determine a schedule for implementing parts of the plan that include management of resources such as recreation, wilderness, transportation, and cultural resources.



Public Involvement throughout the Planning Process

The broad-based collaborative planning that created the approved RMP involved all known groups with interests in the area. As a result of this process, the Black Rock-High Rock NCA now has a far better plan for managing its future than would otherwise have been possible. The RMP is the result of a lot of hard work from many parties including the general public, local communities, Tribal, State, and federal agencies, and the RAC NCA Subgroup. BLM is very grateful to everyone who participated in this complex and lengthy process.

Scoping: Scoping provided an opportunity for the public to suggest issues to be addressed in the RMP. Public involvement included eight “open house” scoping meetings, a scoping workshop for Tribal representatives, and two additional workshops for the public that resulted in 825 comments.

Resource Advisory Council Black Rock-High Rock NCA Subgroup: The Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Subgroup worked collaboratively with BLM and provided advice and counsel to the two parent RACs. The NCA Subgroup included 26 members and met 10 times, donating a total of 2500 hours of their time to the NCA planning process.

Draft RMP/EIS: Approximately 1,300 copies of the Draft RMP/EIS were mailed out to interested individuals, governments, agencies, and organizations. The document was also made available on the Black Rock-High Rock NCA planning webpage.

Five public meetings were held during the 90-day public comment period for the Draft. A total of 320 comment letters were received from federal and State agencies, Tribal governments, local governments, advisory groups, conservation or environmental organizations, commercial interests, and other interested members of the public. About 4,000 additional comments were received as form letters via e-mail. About 75 letters contained what were considered substantive comments.

Proposed RMP/Final EIS: As mentioned earlier, a 30-day protest period on the Proposed RMP yielded eight protests, all of which were subsequently resolved. A 60-day Governor’s consistency review period resulted in several concerns, which were also successfully resolved.

Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Early in the planning process, the BLM initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding potential impacts of actions proposed in the RMP to federally listed species or species proposed for listing. The USFWS provided their Biological Opinion on the Proposed Plan on January 31, 2004. The Biological Opinion concluded that implementation of the RMP would not jeopardize the continued existence of any of the four affected species.

Tribal Participation: In addition to a special scoping workshop dedicated to Tribal representatives copies of all documents were sent to each of the Tribal groups for review and comment. The Council Chairs of two Tribal governments were members of the RAC Subgroup and provided input to the BLM and other members of the subgroup throughout the planning process. The BLM held two open meetings specifically for Tribal representatives and BLM managers appeared before six Tribal Council meetings. 🌵

